

May 15, 1961

Mr. Robert P. Clark
Office of the Curator
44 Holyoke House
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Clark:

Your letter of April 22, 1961, arrived during my absence from the city.

Your question of "conflict of interest" in regard to the Committee of Consultants could be applied to virtually all individuals qualified to act in this capacity. Indeed it would be difficult to find a distinguished and knowledgeable medical scientist who has not acted in some advisory role to the N.I.H. This is actually one of the major factors underlying the soundness and strength of the N.I.H. structure. Finally one must rely on the integrity of medical scientist which I believe has long been well established.

In response to your second question, the Committee heard witnesses not only from N.I.H. but also from virtually all other federal and non-federal agencies, voluntary organizations, committees, councils, foundations, and the like having some interest and concern with medical research.

In regard to Mr. Russell's article in last October's Harper's Magazine, I would only state that I think it was most unfortunate that he should express personal opinions so far removed from actual facts. All the factual information which our Committee, as well as others, have been able to obtain, provided evidence contradicting his opinion. Indeed, it is such evidence that has been obtained annually by the congressional appropriation committees that has prompted congress to increase the medical research budgets. Actually the needs have grown more rapidly than the budget increases.

Sincerely yours,

Michael F. De Bakey, M.D.

MED:d:

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